

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the subject application. The Office Action of April 26, 2005 has been received and contents carefully reviewed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-6 and 10.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1 and 4. Claims 2, 7-9 and 11-17 are withdrawn as the result of an earlier restriction requirement. Accordingly, claims 1-17 are currently pending in the present application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a), because the drawings do not show every feature claim 4. In response, Applicants have amended claim 4 and paragraph [0065] of the specification. No new matter is added to the specification. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

The Examiner further objected to paragraph [0028] of the specification because of informalities. In response, Applicants have amended paragraph [0028] as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

In addition, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Takeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,799,057). The rejection is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1 as amended is allowable over the cited references in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including, for example, "...a second start pulse input terminal for selectively receiving one of the start pulse and an output signal of a next block." Because Takeda et al. fails to teach or suggest at least this feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable.

Applicants believe this application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that a telephone conference would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the

telephone number (202) 496-7500. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Dated: July 26, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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